



Fact Sheet

Container gardening – home grown goodness

Imagine running out your back door to pick all the ingredients you need for a delicious salad. No matter how much space you have, you can plant a successful vegetable garden and have fresh veggies all summer. All you need to do is choose the location, find the containers, select the plants, and water them appropriately.

When selecting a location for your containers, consider how much direct sunshine your plants will need. Most vegetables need at least six hours of direct sunlight to grow well. Place these on the south or west side of your home. Vegetables like lettuce, carrots, and radishes can grow well with only three hours of sunlight.

You can use almost any container for your plants. Repurpose old milk cartons or rusted water cans. The container needs room for the roots of your plants. Most grow to no more than 10 inches long. Make sure it has holes to drain excess water, and it isn't made of material that will absorb extra heat.

You have many options when selecting seeds. Some of the easiest vegetables to grow include bush beans, lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber, eggplant, peas, potatoes, squash, and Swiss chard. Some are specifically developed for containers, like "patio" varieties of tomato, zucchini, cucumber and peppers. Some need full sun, while others prefer a shadier environment. The most important thing is to choose foods you and your family enjoy eating.

Plants have to be watered correctly to thrive. Poke your finger about an inch down into the soil around the plant. If it is dry, it is time to water. Drain any excess water, as plants should never sit in pooled water.

Planting vegetables in containers around your porch or yard can provide you with healthy food options all summer long, and save you money at the grocery store.

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Phelps/Maries County Health Dept

200 N Main, Suite G51, Rolla, MO 65401

(573) 458-6010 office

www.phelpscountyhealth.com



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